

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **BENNETT'S VILLAGE TO HOST SEPTEMBER EVENTS**

**CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA–September 3, 2019–** Bennett's Village, a local nonprofit partnering with The Arc of the Piedmont and the City of Charlottesville dedicated to building a place where all can play at Pen Park, is gearing up for an exciting September full of design and fun. Please feel free to share widely. If you are interested in learning more about any of these events, please let us know at [bennettsvillage@gmail.com](mailto:bennettsvillage@gmail.com) or call 434-202-1120.

Bennett's Village is named after Bennett McClurken-Gibney. A boy who loved to play and happened to use a wheelchair to get around. Nearby playgrounds are not designed for all people—like those in wheelchairs or those with sensory disabilities. If Bennett's family wanted him to have the freedom to play, they had to drive all the way to Richmond, home of Park365, the nearest accessible playground.

Bennett's sudden passing in February of 2018, at just five years old, left an immeasurable sense of loss in the lives of all who loved him. Inspired by his wish to have a birthday party at the Park365, they wanted to create a place here in our community where day-to-day real-world barriers could be forgotten and where ALL children and adults could enjoy the magic of connecting with the world and each other.

### **Bennett's Village community information meeting**

Please join us for a community meeting on Tuesday, September 17, from 6 to 8 p.m. to discuss plans for a multi-generational all-abilities playground to be built at Pen Park. The meeting will be held at the Charlottesville Parks and Recreation Office at 501 East Main Street on the Downtown Mall (under the Market Street garage).

We want to update you on the project, answer questions, and hear YOUR ideas.

Please note: Doors automatically lock at 6:30. If community members arrive later, they will need to ring the doorbell to gain entrance.

If you have any questions, please email [bennettsvillage@gmail.com](mailto:bennettsvillage@gmail.com).

### **Wheelchair basketball fundraiser**

The Charlottesville Cardinals wheelchair basketball team, in conjunction with physical education teachers of Charlottesville City Schools, will hold a benefit wheelchair basketball game for Bennett's Village on Friday, September 20, at the Charlottesville High School gymnasium at 7 p.m. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$5.00 at the door.

Come watch the Nationally ranked Charlottesville Cardinals Wheelchair Basketball Team will take on the UVA Women's Basketball & Softball Teams and Players from the BCBA! Please join us for a ton of fun and to help build a place where ALL can play!

### **Hallowheels is coming to Charlottesville!**

Bennett's Village, in partnership with Virginia CATS (Children's Assistive Technology Service) will be bringing Hallowheels to the Charlottesville area this fall!

[Hallowheels](#) is a program started by CATS that builds fantastic Halloween costumes around kids' wheelchairs, changing something that may be a boundary to social interactions into something that helps kids feel cool and special. This year, with the help of UVA's Drama Department and members of our community, we hope to make costumes for 4-5 lucky kids.

To make this happen, we need your support. If you want to help with the creative part of this process, please reply to this email or contact Brian Gibney at [brian.gibney@gmail.com](mailto:brian.gibney@gmail.com) before September 21st.

Each kiddo will also need a fiscal sponsor—an individual or organization—to fund their costumes. Sponsorship of a child requires only a \$200 donation. It takes a small amount to make a huge difference for one lucky kid!

In addition to knowing that you'll make a child's Halloween special, sponsors will be listed on the CATS and Bennett's Village websites and social media channels, as well as listed in local media coverage of the event.

To sponsor a kid, please contact Cathie Cummins, CATS Executive Director, at [cathie@atdevicesforkids.org](mailto:cathie@atdevicesforkids.org) or 540-493-2285.

**To learn more about Bennett's Village, see [bennettsvillage.org](http://bennettsvillage.org).**